



2004 Legislative Session Progress Report to the Community

Rep. Dan Roach, R-Bonney Lake

31st Legislative District

How to reach me

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For more information
and specifics about
the issues
addressed here, I
encourage you to
visit my Web page:

[http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/
members/roach.htm](http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/roach.htm)

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thanks for all your emails, letters, calls, and visits. You help me identify the challenges that face us. Please keep your communications coming.

This Legislative Update highlights the 2004 session. Given space limitations, there may be something you're interested in that I didn't cover. I invite you to visit my website (<http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/roach.htm>) or contact my office and we'll provide the information.

Now that work in Olympia is complete, I'll be "on the ground" in our communities participating in local events and meetings. I encourage you to let me know about any events that are scheduled to occur and for which you'd like my attendance or participation.

It's an honor to serve and represent you. I look forward to seeing many of you soon!

Sincerely,

Dan Roach



Protecting children

The most gratifying surprise this session was passing a law that toughens penalties for child molesters. A great injustice in our current law involves loopholes that allow child rapists to be released without prison time – often to repeat their horrific crimes against other innocent victims. To protect children, we passed a law to reform SSOSA (Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternatives) so that child molesters would be locked up and separated from their victims. The new law puts justice back into our system by increasing punishment for child molesters and giving victims and their families more rights.



Photo courtesy of Dennis Box at the Bonney Lake Courier-Herald.

Members of the Chinese delegation having lunch with students and faculty at White River High School in Buckley.



Photo courtesy of Dennis Box at the Bonney Lake Courier-Herald.

Rep. Roach with members of the Chinese delegation he hosted, studying coffee choices at the Bonney Lake Starbucks. Roach introduced the group of young political leaders to Washington lawmakers and prominent employers, as well as local government, businesses and schools during a week-long tour in March that was part of an American Council for Young Political Leaders international exchange program.



Help for seniors

Seniors who have Medicare Supplement insurance can once again save as much as \$300 annually off the cost of their premiums. A new law, in effect right now and in time for annual renewals, gives seniors back their discounts for various payment methods, including electronic fund transfers or annual installments, and for spouses.

Tax Relief

I continue to fight for more tax relief for citizens, employers and local government. It's a slow process in the Legislature but even small victories like these are a step in the right direction:

- I helped pass a new law that gets car buyers what they want without paying more. Before, car dealers were taxed for trading vehicles between sister dealerships. Now, your local dealership can deliver the car you want (perhaps in that cherry red color you must have) easily and without extra cost. Thanks to local residents and dealers who shared this problem with me and supported the solution.
- Enumclaw will receive \$1 million to help with its wastewater treatment plan upgrade. The city's ability to keep up with community needs and continue building hinges on this improvement. The funding jumpstarts the project and decreases the amount of money the city must borrow and the cost passed on to ratepayers.
- I want to do all I can to help seniors protect their homes. A new law I

supported increases the amount of money you can earn and still be eligible for property tax exemptions. If you're on a fixed income and have a disability, you should now get more relief from high property taxes.

- We passed a compromise state budget that doesn't raise taxes or cut core programs and leaves more than \$300 million in reserves. I and other lawmakers pushed for even greater fiscal discipline in the budget but, despite our efforts, the state will likely face a \$1 billion budget shortfall in 2005-07.

Jobs

We must continue efforts to grow the economy and make Washington a good place for jobs.

We passed legislation to continue tax incentives for employers that create high-tech, high-wage jobs. Some 560 companies are benefiting from them. But that's not enough. More must be done for all employers in Washington. I'll continue to work for a more consistent, reliable tax formula that benefits all job providers.

The Legislature made a small step in the right direction by passing small



group insurance reform with the goal of giving small employers and working families the option of affordable health insurance.

What did not materialize is comprehensive tort reform to control liability insurance costs for doctors, employers and local government. Neither did other important laws to help the economy and create new jobs.

When we pass real state government reforms, like limiting agency rule-making authority and fixing the workers' compensation program, we'll be better able to provide the overall tax relief that's needed to improve our quality of life here in Washington. I'll continue to lead that charge.

Education, parents and choice



The Legislature passed a charter schools measure. A limited and targeted program, 45 new schools will participate over the next six years. One good reason for opportunity schools is to assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting the state's academic achievement standards, and provide hope to children in low income communities. Another is to provide choice for parents in their children's education.



Rep. Roach with constituents Larry Walker and Martha Black when the governor signed the motorcycle insurance bill into law. With their help, Roach crafted a legislative solution to protect motorcycle owners. Now insurers must clarify what's in motorcycle insurance coverage for accidents and damages involving uninsured motorists, similar to how it works now for auto insurance.

Keep in touch...I want to hear from you

Because we are entering an election year, the law allows me to send you only two House-sponsored mailings between now and next November. We can, however, continue our communication and correspond with constituents who contact us with questions or requests for information regarding specific issues.

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